

S O U T H E R N D I S T I N C T I O N

A SOUTHERN LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

\$3.95 JANUARY 2007

Seabound with
Georgia
Shrimpers

Take It Easy
Little
St. Simons

A Tour Through the
Golden
Isles

Lighthouses
OF GEORGIA



Mac's

Island Restaurant & Martini Bar

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Photography: Al Wise

In the center of St. Simons Island Village an old standby, JMac's, has entered a new era with a refurbished look and an old friend at the helm. After a six-year hiatus, J. Mac Mason returned to the restaurant he created in 1991 and launched an ambitious renovation project.

The way the space looks today you would never imagine this venue had such a history. Formerly Birdie's Restaurant, this humble diner was run by three sisters who were using half the space that JMac's currently occupies. A full-service bar now sits in a space previously used for storage. Mason, who is affectionately known as Mac by the droves of locals who have rediscovered this place, had the vision to open the unused space into the adjoining rooms and create a bar.

While the previous owners tried to retain the essence of Mac in the restaurant, it never really held the magnetism of the man whose name was still on the door. Mason has a spirit from the past that comes through as soon as you meet him. It may be his penchant for dressing in the open double-breasted blazer, bow tie, crisp cuffed trousers and \$200 Johnston and Murphy loafers with no socks. It's no surprise that this man once owned a clothing store in Virginia. A graduate of Randolph-Macon College, Mac brings with him a Virginia gentleman's persona





If you want to sip on a martini or swirl a glass of fine wine while sitting in the Moroccan-influenced bar with copper and bronze fixtures, JMac's lounge is large enough to allow you the choice of dressing down and staying out of sight from the more formal dining area.

Lisa Torbett and her team of licensed interior designers have taken the three rooms previously dedicated to dining and uniquely redesigned them using some cutting edge styles not yet seen on St. Simons Island. With a coastal feel, two of the rooms are elegant places to sip a cocktail and enjoy the background music or, on some nights, the sounds of live jazz.

The dining area has tables set up throughout the room to prevent you from feeling as if you are sitting over someone else's dinner. Large alabaster-style fixtures that help soften the prominent coral tones accent the overhead diffused lighting. With white painted brick walls and white linen covered tables, the room invites you to relax and



experience the event. Plantation shutters over windows adjacent to the dining room lend a nice peek at the outdoors without passersby seeing inside.

Returning to the restaurant business after a six-year absence, Mason said he feels like he never left. With a top-notch staff he could never have imagined when JMac's opened 16 years ago, he knows this is where he was always meant to be. And Mason's skills in providing a service to the community and visitors clearly are serving him well.

Don't be surprised if you run into a celebrity trying to have a private moment away from adoring fans. But whether you are a famous novelist just passing through or a seasonal visitor wanting for a taste of the coast, JMac's Restaurant will surpass your expectations and leave you planning your next visit as soon as possible. □